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Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

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Human resources management

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the following reports of the Secretary-General on human resources management:

(a) Human resources management reform (A/61/228);

(b) Investing in people (A/61/255);

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(c) Investing in people: reforming the Field Service category: investing in meeting the human resources requirements of United Nations peace operations in the twenty-first century (A/61/255/Add.1 and Corr.1);

(d) Gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities (A/61/257/Add.1);

(e) Employment of retired former staff (A/61/257/Add.2);

(f) Consultants and individual contractors (A/61/257/Add.3).

The Committee also had before it reports of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/61/257) and on the Management Performance Board (A/61/319). During its consideration of the reports, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification. At their request, the Committee also met with representatives of the Staff Committee.

2. The report of the Secretary-General on human resources management reform (A/61/228) gives an overview of action taken with respect to reform initiatives by the Secretary-General in 1997, 2002 and 2004 (see A/51/950, A/57/387 and Corr.1 and A/59/2005), and thus provides a backdrop to the reform measures proposed by the Secretary-General in his report on investing in people (A/61/255 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1). Therefore, where appropriate, the Advisory Committee has included comments on the report on human resources management reform in the section below dealing with investing in people.

II. Investing in people

A. General considerations

3. The report of the Secretary-General on investing in people (A/61/255) provides details on the human resources reform measures outlined in proposals 1 to 4, 7 and 22 of his report entitled "Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide" (A/60/692 and Corr.1). The salient features of the reforms are as follows:

(a) A more proactive, targeted and speedy recruitment and staffing system;

(b) A more integrated, Organization-wide mobility programme that would include field locations;

(c) Streamlined contractual arrangements;

(d) Harmonized conditions of service of United Nations field staff and those of the funds and programmes to meet the needs of an increasingly field-based Organization;

(e) Enhanced career development;

(f) Strengthened leadership;

(g) A limited voluntary staff buyout.

4. The total estimated requirements of the Secretary-General's proposed reforms for 2007 amount to $79,432,700 ($36,215,200 under the regular budget, $42,424,500

under the support account and $793,000 in extrabudgetary funding). The Secretary-General is requesting six additional temporary posts under the regular budget (2 P-4, 1 P-3, 1 P-2 and 2 General Service (Other level)) and five temporary posts under the support account for peacekeeping operations (2 P-4, 1 P-3 and 2 General Service (Other level)).

5. **The Advisory Committee notes with appreciation the significant effort made by the Secretary-General to reform the management of human resources at the United Nations. In the opinion of the Committee, the reports contain a number of innovative ideas, and although some of them require further development, their general thrust and direction is welcome; they should facilitate further progress in this area, and the Committee has proceeded to consider the proposals before it on their own merits.**

6. The Advisory Committee notes, as it did in its initial report on the Secretary-General's proposed reforms (see A/60/735, para. 5), that a number of the proposals presented are within the purview of the Secretary-General in his role as Chief Administrative Officer of the Organization pursuant to Article 97 of the Charter of the United Nations. The Committee also notes that some of the Secretary-General's proposals have been the subject of past decisions of the General Assembly. The Committee understands from its discussions with representatives of the Secretary-General that the intent in structuring the report on investing in people (A/61/255) was to give a picture of the entire package of proposals, including information on expected impact, required changes to the Staff Regulations and Rules, the impact on the role and authority of the central human resources functions, specific accountability measures and a timeline for implementation and resource implications, with an elaboration of action requested of the General Assembly clearly set out in separate sections. A consolidated listing of the action requested of the Assembly for all of the proposals relating to human resources management is provided in paragraph 401 of that report.

7. **While the Advisory Committee appreciates the effort on the part of the Secretariat to provide exhaustive coverage of the measures proposed, it notes what appears to be an increasing tendency on the part of the Secretary-General to solicit the support of intergovernmental bodies for initiatives that are clearly within his purview as Chief Administrative Officer under Article 97 of the Charter. The Committee has commented on this on numerous occasions. In this connection, the Committee recalls paragraphs 49 and 50 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 (A/60/7), in which it noted, with increasing concern, a blurring of the lines between the policy-setting role of the General Assembly and the administrative responsibilities of the Secretary-General. The Committee stated that "the Secretary-General — if he is to be held accountable — has the responsibility to use the means he considers best suited for implementing those mandates conferred upon him" (A/60/7, chap. I, para. 50). With these considerations in mind, the Committee, in the present report, will concentrate its comments on those proposals that require action by the Assembly.**

8. **The Advisory Committee points out that a number of the proposals put forward by the Secretary-General will be affected by major reports that are to be issued in 2007. Included among those are the reports of the International Civil Service Commission based on the recommendations of the Working**

Group on Entitlements of Internationally Recruited Staff Serving in Non-Family Duty Stations and the report of the Redesign Panel on the United Nations internal justice system. In these cases, the Committee has advised that action on such proposals await the issuance of the reports; this would also provide an opportunity for the new Secretary-General to have input.

9. The Advisory Committee notes, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General on the Management Performance Board (A/61/319), that steps have been taken to strengthen the performance assessment of senior managers. **The Committee recommends that the Secretary-General be requested to ensure robust monitoring of the implementation of the measures described in that report.**

10. **The Advisory Committee is encouraged to note that in cases where delegated authority in the management of human resources has been improperly exercised, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management would advise the Secretary-General, who could limit or withdraw the delegated authority (see A/61/255, para. 101). The Committee has commented regularly on the need for clear lines of authority and the requisite accountability. The General Assembly has also emphasized this aspect of the administration of the United Nations. For reforms to be effective, each staff member must be keenly aware of his or her own responsibilities for carrying out approved programmes of work and achieving goals and implementing mandates. A system of incentives and sanctions is yet to be established; this should be urgently addressed so that it forms an integral part of the personnel management system.**

11. **On a related matter, the Advisory Committee reiterates the importance of carrying out consultation with the staff in accordance with article VIII of the Staff Regulations of the United Nations and section I, paragraph 12, and section XVI of General Assembly resolution 59/266.**

B. Proposal 1 — recruitment and staffing

12. **The Advisory Committee stresses once again the relevance and importance of Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter, which reads as follows:**

> **The paramount consideration in the employment of the staff and in the determination of the conditions of service shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. Due regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible.**

The Committee welcomes the intention of the Secretary-General to ensure that the Office of Human Resources Management reasserts a more proactive role in managing the human resources of the United Nations (see A/61/255, paras. 67-69).

13. **The Advisory Committee welcomes the emphasis that the Secretary-General is placing on strategic workforce planning. In the view of the Committee, such planning should facilitate meeting the human resources needs of the Organization, as well as achieving the human resources targets set by the General Assembly.** To support this process, the Secretary-General intends, among other things, to engage in more extensive outreach in order to attract promising candidates and to establish rosters of pre-screened candidates, which would be used

as the primary instrument for recruitment, placement and promotion throughout the Secretariat, including in the field. In addition, the establishment of a dedicated recruitment and staffing centre within the Office of Human Resources Management is proposed to build the rosters and conduct outreach campaigns, monitor the functioning of central review bodies and set and administer the national competitive examination and other pre-employment examinations (see A/61/255, paras. 76-79). As noted in paragraph 91 of the report, all of the proposals are aimed at reducing the current recruitment time of 174 days by one half.

Rosters

14. The Advisory Committee has, in the past, expressed its support for rosters as an important tool to expedite the staff selection process (see A/60/7, para. 65). The current roster system is set out in the administrative instruction on the staff selection system (ST/AI/2002/4). Under that system, candidates who applied for a job but were not selected were to be automatically placed on a roster, valid for one year, for future vacancies with similar functions at the same level. If an eligible roster candidate was suitable for a position, the programme manager could recommend immediate selection without reference to the central review body, thus significantly cutting down recruitment time.

15. Under the proposed system, recruitment would be done largely on the basis of rosters rather than vacancy announcements for specific posts. Generic job profiles would be developed and generic vacancy announcements issued for different occupational groups on the basis of organizational needs identified through strategic workforce planning exercises. Generic job profiles would be posted for 60 days. Qualifications of candidates would be pre-screened by human resources officers and confirmed by experts on the basis of competency-based interviews. The central review bodies would endorse the generic vacancy announcement and review the process leading to proposals for placement on the roster. Pre-screened candidates would be administratively cleared (i.e., through checking of references, educational background, employment history and internal clearances) and placed on rosters. As vacancies arose, the heads of department or office would conduct interviews with candidates on the roster to determine suitability for the positions without having to go through the vacancy announcement and competency-based interviewing process, thus reducing recruitment time. Staff members would also be able to apply for placement on the rosters for posts at the same level as or one level higher than their current level. In cases where posts were highly specialized and managers were unable to identify a suitable candidate from the roster, specific vacancy announcements would be issued. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that generic vacancy announcements would most likely cover 80 per cent of Professional posts and 90 per cent of General Service posts.

16. **In the view of the Advisory Committee, accurate workforce planning will be critical in ensuring that the rosters are not so large as to be difficult to manage. In this connection, the Committee is not convinced that adequate thought has been given to the administrative and planning work required for the successful management of rosters on a large scale.**

17. The Advisory Committee also notes that there are currently a number of rosters already in use, including the fast-track roster (see paras. 22-25 below), the roster of successful G-to-P candidates and the roster of successful national

competitive examination candidates. Upon enquiry concerning the difficulties in placing candidates from rosters resulting from national competitive examinations, the Committee was informed that a major constraint was the limited number of available P-2 vacancies in core occupational groups: as at 30 June 2006 there were 30 vacant P-2 geographical posts throughout the Secretariat. In this connection, the Committee enquired as to the number of P-2 posts that were occupied by staff on special post allowance or temporary staff on contracts of less than 12 months. It was informed that during the bienniums 2002-2003 and 2004-2005, there were 120 and 129 staff on special post allowance to the P-2 level, respectively, and 296 and 426 staff on short-term appointments at the P-2 level, respectively. **The Committee is of the view that in the transition phase (2007-2009) between the old system and the new, candidates should not have to reapply for functions for which they have already been cleared.**

18. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that one of the constraints in placing successful national competitive examination candidates was the number of persons on the roster in certain occupational groups at certain times. The occupational groups in which the exam is offered are determined taking into account the number of candidates already on the roster for each occupational group and future placement projections in those occupations; however, preparations for the national competitive examination begin two years in advance, and the assumptions made are subject to a variety of subsequent events, such as a change in the desirable ranges of Member States, the number of recruitments against geographical posts at the P-3 level and above and the movement of staff previously recruited at the P-2 level to other levels or functions. Another main constraint is the limited number of available P-2 vacancies in core occupational groups, as well as the fact that P-2 posts may not be offered when the incumbent is on temporary assignment or mission, as the post is blocked for the incumbent's return. The Committee was informed that a further constraint to placing successful national competitive examination candidates was the lack of a prompt decision on the part of some programme managers in selecting from the roster when a vacancy arose and the lack of a centralized system where placement was managed, coordinated and closely monitored. **The Committee expects that every effort will be made to ensure prompt placement of successful candidates.**

19. The Advisory Committee notes that in order to respond effectively and expeditiously to possible unexpected surge requirements, heads of departments or offices would have the discretion to select candidates from either a roster of pre-screened candidates or from departmental databases of qualified candidates in accordance with their delegated authority. **The Committee expects that use of this discretion will be carefully monitored on a regular basis.**

Reduction of advertising time

20. Under the proposals, in cases where posts are highly specialized and managers are unable to identify a suitable candidate from the roster, specific vacancy announcements are to be issued. The procedures for selecting personnel for such posts would remain as they are under the current system; however, the General Assembly is requested to approve the reduction of advertising time for vacancy announcements for specific vacancies from 60 to 30 days (see A/61/255, para. 121 (a)). Generic vacancy announcements, which should be the majority of vacancy announcements, would be posted for 60 days.

21. **While the proposal to reduce the advertising time for specific vacancies from 60 to 30 days is a matter for policy decision by the General Assembly, the Advisory Committee has, in the past, supported the idea of reducing the advertising time from 60 to 45 days, with the caveat that measures should be taken to ensure that Member States can opt to continue to receive paper copies of vacancy announcements, which should be provided by the time the electronic vacancy announcement appears. The Committee has also stated that, in view of the persistent gap between staff from overrepresented Member States and those from underrepresented or unrepresented Member States, it expects the widest possible timely circulation of vacancy announcements so as to maximize the effort to attract qualified personnel from unrepresented or underrepresented countries (see A/59/446, para. 15). At the same time, the Committee points out that targeted outreach efforts and rostering initiatives may lead to reductions in the overall recruitment time; the Committee notes that this has been the recent experience in peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, such efforts may prove helpful in meeting General Assembly targets as well. The Committee expects that programme managers will be held fully accountable for carrying out timely planning for the filling of vacancies in their offices.**

Elimination of eligibility restrictions based on category and continuation of the fast-track roster

22. In paragraph 121 (b) of the report, the General Assembly is requested to approve the elimination of eligibility restrictions based on category in order to provide greater opportunities for staff in the General Service and related categories to be promoted to posts not subject to geographical distribution at the P-2 level through a competitive process. As indicated in paragraph 85, posts at the P-2 level subject to geographical distribution would now be filled entirely through competitive examinations, and the G-to-P examination would no longer be held. Language posts would continue to be filled through separate examinations.

23. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that it is the intention of the Secretary-General to amend the policy and processes for recruitment and staffing. All applications would be considered after expiration of the deadline, thus eliminating distinctions based on, among other things, geographical status.

24. In paragraph 121 (c) of the report, the General Assembly is requested to authorize the Secretary-General to continue the use of the special roster of candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States for posts at the P-4 and P-5 levels (the fast-track roster), the establishment of which was authorized by the Assembly in its resolution 59/266 for a trial period of two years (ending December 2006), with a view to improving the geographical representation of such Member States until they are within their desirable ranges. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General, 319 applications have been received from nationals of 9 of the Member States concerned in relation to 11 posts that have been identified at the P-4 and P-5 levels as part of the pilot project (see A/61/255, para. 47, and A/61/228, para. 99). These are currently under review by programme managers and central review bodies. No appointments have yet been made.

25. **The Advisory Committee believes that the proposals in paragraph 121 (b) and (c) are policy matters to be determined by the General Assembly.**

Establishment of a recruitment and staffing centre

26. To meet the estimated requirements for the proposed establishment of a recruitment and staffing centre, the General Assembly is requested to appropriate a total amount of $755,200 under the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 ($638,400 under section 28C, Office of Human Resources Management; $71,000 under section 28D, Office of Central Support Services; and $45,800 under section 35, Staff assessment, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment) and to grant the Secretary-General commitment authority in the amount of $366,100 (net of staff assessment) under the budget of the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period ending 30 June 2007, to be reported in the performance report for the support account for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007. The Assembly is also requested to note that further requirements relating to the transitional period, including the establishment of a post of head of the recruitment centre at the D-2 level, would be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009, as appropriate, and the proposed budget for the support account for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, it is envisaged that the reforms will be carried out over a transitional period of three years (2007-2009) (see A/61/255, para. 115). The estimated requirements in paragraph 121 (d) and (e) relate only to the first year of the transitional period (2007).

27. As indicated in paragraphs 119 and 120 of the report, general temporary assistance is requested in the amount of $500,600, equivalent to one P-5, one P-4 and two General Service (Other level) positions. Non-post resources in the amount of $889,700 are requested as follows: $250,000 for consultancy services to provide expertise in mapping out a new set of business processes and to assist in the setting up of the operations of the centre; $300,000 for advertising and outreach campaigns; $180,000 for travel costs relating to recruitment campaigns; and $159,700 for common services such as rental of office accommodation, communications and supplies.

28. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 115 of the report that during the transitional period the Office of Human Resources Management "intends to conduct a detailed review of existing structures and capacities relating to recruitment and staffing with a view to realigning its organizational structure to reflect requirements of the new reform proposals". Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that both the existing Examinations and Tests Section and the Staffing Service would form part of the new recruitment and staffing centre. **The Committee points out that improving the recruitment and staffing functions in the Office of Human Resources Management is within the purview of the Secretary-General as Chief Administrative Officer. However, in the Committee's opinion, the intended review should be completed and resources redeployed to the extent possible before dedicating any additional financial resources to it. Accordingly, at this time, the Committee recommends utilization of existing resources rather than the proposed appropriation and commitment authority requested in paragraph 121 (d) and (e) for 2007.**

29. **As to paragraph 121 (f) of the report, in the Advisory Committee's view, there is no need for the General Assembly to note that further requirements for 2008 and 2009 for the centre, including a D-2 post to head it, will be presented in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 or to**

pronounce itself in any way at this time on the resources that may be requested in 2008-2009, since it is entirely within the authority of the Secretary-General to include any request he sees fit in the proposed programme budget.

C. Proposal 2 — mobility

30. **The Advisory Committee has a long history of supporting the promotion of mobility of staff as a means to develop a flexible and multi-skilled workforce. However, the Committee has some concerns regarding the financial, administrative and management implications of the mandatory managed reassignment programme as it has been conceived by the Office of Human Resources Management.**

31. The Advisory Committee notes that precise information on the financial implications of this programme, beyond what it will cost in 2007, has yet to be given (see General Assembly resolution 59/266, sect. VIII, para. 5). Furthermore, as indicated in paragraph 172 of the report, the preliminary estimate of staff that "could potentially move" under the managed mobility programme in 2007 is 500. Of those, it is estimated that approximately 20 per cent might move between duty stations. The attendant financial implications are not included in the estimated requirements for 2007, but are to be reported in the context of the performance report. Moreover, the Committee points out that the mobility programme at present applies only to staff members appointed under the 100 series of the Staff Rules. Should the Assembly approve the introduction of a single United Nations contract as proposed in paragraph 264 (a), many more staff could potentially be included. Similarly, if the Assembly approves the cadre of 2,500 core peacekeeping staff proposed in document A/61/255/Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1, it is also proposed that such staff would be included in the mobility programme.

32. **The Advisory Committee believes that the application of managed mobility could entail significant unforeseen administrative and management implications. Accordingly, the Committee requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly not later than at its sixty-second session on the implementation of the first phase of the envisaged managed mobility, which is to take place for the P-3 and G-7 levels from May to October 2007, along with productivity and financial projections for the envisaged remaining phases and an assessment of the relevant administrative and management issues.**

33. **The Advisory Committee welcomes the reported successes of the managed reassignment programme for P-2 staff (see A/61/228, paras. 127 and 128, and A/61/255, paras. 124 and 125). The Committee believes this is an important programme that will shape the experiences and careers of newly recruited staff and help to make them into the flexible, multi-skilled personnel the Organization requires. It represents an investment on the part of the Organization in its future.** The Secretary-General himself states in paragraph 198 of his report that systematic development of entry-level Professional staff (P-2/P-3) would require that positions at the P-2 and P-3 levels be maintained normally as non-specialist rather than specialist positions.

34. The Advisory Committee notes the efforts made to develop a meaningful system of incentives to mobility. Under the staff selection system, two lateral moves are currently required for promotion to the P-5 level, with certain exceptions. As

indicated in paragraph 145 of the report, geographical mobility, or service at a field mission or another agency for at least one year will be introduced as a precondition for promotion to the P-5 level and above. In addition, international staff serving in duty stations with a more severe hardship classification are to have shorter post occupancy limits, and priority consideration is to be given to those staff members for subsequent reassignment. To address the difficulties faced by dual-career families, the Organization, among other things, will provide career counselling and job search assistance for spouses, give priority consideration to spouses for consulting opportunities, give priority to the relocation of spouses within the mobility programme, review host country agreements with a view to obtaining permission for the spouses to work, and support the creation of inter-agency spouse support networks at all duty stations. **The Committee welcomes these initiatives and encourages the Secretariat to go further with them. The Committee encourages the Secretary-General to give further attention to expediting, as appropriate, agreements between the Secretariat and the United Nations funds and programmes in relation to mobility, in accordance with section VIII, paragraph 9, of General Assembly resolution 59/266. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that progress had been made in concluding agreements with the specialized agencies.**

35. **The Advisory Committee points out that in addition to the roster, there will be a compendium or listing of jobs whose "occupancy limits" have been reached. In the view of the Committee, some thought needs to be given to how the rosters and the compendium might complement each other. The Committee believes it would be useful for programme managers to know which people are going to be available because they must move from their current jobs. In this way, the responsibility for mobility would be shared more equally between staff and management. Furthermore, managers might be able to make use of lateral transfers to fill vacancies and avoid time-consuming recruitment processes to fill vacancies.**

36. In a related matter, the Advisory Committee enquired as to the progress in the compilation of a staff skills inventory. It was informed that the Office of Human Resources Management was considering a number of options for creating and updating a centralized skills inventory, including through the performance appraisal system. **In the opinion of the Committee, the skills inventory could be an important tool for managing both the rosters and mobility.**

37. In paragraph 173 (a) of the report, the General Assembly is requested to decide to eliminate the restrictions on staff on assignment to United Nations peace missions, currently set at 5 per cent of authorized General Service and Field Service posts across missions, with the exception of those missions in a start-up phase or other exceptional circumstances. The 5 per cent limit was set by the Assembly in resolution 59/296 (sect. VIII, para. 6). **While the Advisory Committee is of the view that this is a policy matter for the Assembly to determine, it points out that the financial implications of lifting the limit would be heavy. Furthermore, as it has expressed in the past, the Committee is of the view that a gradual replacement of international staff with national staff, wherever feasible and cost-effective, should be encouraged in the field operations, as it would contribute to capacity-building and transfer of skills to the local population, as well as increasing the feeling of ownership by the local population of activities presently carried out by the missions.**

38. In paragraph 173 (b) of the report, the General Assembly is requested to support the review of host country agreements and the issuance of work permits with a view to supporting the employment of spouses of United Nations staff. **In the view of the Advisory Committee, the undertaking of such a review is within the prerogative of the Secretary-General; accordingly, the Assembly may wish to note the intention of the Secretary-General.**

39. In a related matter, the Advisory Committee notes that in document A/61/228 the General Assembly is being requested to reconsider the policy requiring staff members to renounce permanent resident status in a country other than the country of their nationality before recruitment. As noted in paragraph 2 of the annex to the above-mentioned report, the requirement to renounce permanent resident status stems from a recommendation of the Advisory Committee in 1953 (A/2581, para. 10). In the same paragraph, mention is made of the views held in the Fifth Committee at that time concerning ties with a staff member's country of origin, as well as to the objections of a number of delegations to any extension of the policy of national income tax reimbursement to a further group of staff members. **The General Assembly may wish to bear the foregoing in mind should it revisit this matter.**

40. In paragraph 173 (c) of the report, the General Assembly is requested to approve the establishment of five new temporary posts (2 P-4, 1 P-3 and 2 General Service (Other level)). In paragraph 173 (d), the General Assembly is requested to appropriate a total amount of $366,400 under the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 relating to the establishment of three of the new temporary posts (2 P-4, and 1 General Service (Other level)) and associated common services requirements in connection with the managed reassignment programme in 2007. **The Advisory Committee recognizes the need for staff support to carry out the functions described in the report of the Secretary-General as a temporary measure pending further development of staff mobility and the action that may be taken on it by the General Assembly. The Committee therefore recommends approval of the proposal in paragraph 173 (d).** In paragraph 173 (e) the Assembly is requested to grant the Secretary-General commitment authority in the amount of $124,700 for the requirements relating to the establishment of two of the new temporary posts (1 P-3 and 1 General Service (Other level)) and associated common services costs under the budget for the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period ending 30 June 2007 to be reported in the context of the performance report for the support account for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007. **The Committee recommends against approval of the proposal in paragraph 173 (e), as peacekeeping is not involved in the mobility programme at this point (see para. 76 below).**

41. In paragraph 173 (f) of the report, the General Assembly is requested to note that "further requirements" will be presented in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 and the proposed budget for the support account for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008. **As stated in paragraph 29 above, the Advisory Committee sees no need for the Assembly to note how potential future requirements will be presented to it.**

D. Proposal 3 — career development

42. The Secretary-General outlines a career development policy in which the ongoing professional development of staff plays an important part. The measures taken to date are set out in paragraphs 175-182 of his report. In paragraph 183, the Secretary-General sets out the evolution of staff development from training focused on a limited set of skills to a strategic function with an organizational development focus.

43. The Secretary-General proposes doubling the regular budget resources dedicated to the training and development of staff from the current $10 million to $20 million, in order to expand the online learning environment through e-learning and the establishment of a United Nations Virtual Academy; provide for the introduction of programmes to groom high-potential staff; permit greater attention to leadership and management development, more extensive career counselling and other career support activities; expand programmes for substantive and technical skills on the basis of departmental annual needs assessments; and harmonize language and communication programmes among duty stations (A/61/255, para. 190). In addition, development programmes for women leaders and emerging women leaders at the middle-management level would be expanded. General Service development programmes to build competencies in areas such as supervisory skills, communication, teamwork, work planning and organization, client orientation and time management would also be increased, and training programmes would be expanded in the area of administration justice (A/61/255, para. 195). Mandatory development programmes for P-2 staff would be enhanced and extended to P-3 staff, and advancement to successive levels of responsibility in the Organization would be linked to the completion of mandatory training in such areas as ethics, budget and finance and human resources.

44. **The Advisory Committee supports training as an important aspect of staff development and believes that the United Nations should be an organization that nurtures learning and professional development on the part of its staff. This is essential both to attract and retain staff who indeed meet the highest standards of competence, as the Charter requires, and to foster the leadership, creativity and versatility that the work of the Organization demands.**

45. The Advisory Committee notes the statement in paragraph 188 of the report of the Secretary-General that current training funds amount to less than 1 per cent of staff costs, which is well below the level of other United Nations funds and programmes and far from the average of at least 4 per cent in best-practice organizations. By doubling training resources, as recommended in paragraph 222 (a) of his report, the Secretary-General is in fact recommending financing at the level of 2 per cent of staff costs. **While the Secretary-General has noted the training requirements of the funds and programmes, the Committee points out that the training needs of the United Nations Secretariat are not necessarily comparable to those of the funds and programmes; they should therefore be assessed on the basis of the requirements of the United Nations itself.**

46. **The Advisory Committee is of the opinion that in order to enable the General Assembly to make an informed decision on the Secretary-General's proposal, information should be provided, in the context of the proposed programme budget for 2008-2009, on staff development policy and strategy,**

outlining priorities for staff development, the results and timetables envisaged for the various initiatives, the balance between centrally provided programmes and support for staff members to use other learning vehicles, and means for assessing effectiveness and impact. In providing that information and the budget estimates, the Secretary-General should bear in mind the requirement for training resources related to International Public Sector Accounting Standards, as referred to in the Advisory Committee's related report (A/60/870, paras. 38-42) and dealt with by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/283, section IV. Pending consideration of the proposed programme budget for 2008-2009, the Committee therefore recommends that the Assembly defer a decision on the Secretary-General's proposal to double the biennial training budget. In this connection, the Advisory Committee sees no need for the General Assembly to pronounce itself on the proposal in paragraph 222 (c) of A/61/255.

47. As indicated in paragraphs 216 to 221 of the report, additional training resources in the amount of $10 million are sought under the programme budget for the biennium for 2006-2007 as follows: $5 million for leadership and management development, $3.5 million for mobility and career development, $1.5 million for information technology training, $1 million to support the development and implementation of mandatory training programmes and $1 million to support the expansion of language and communication programmes. In paragraph 222 (b) of his report, the Secretary-General requests an additional appropriation of $10 million for training for the biennium 2006-2007.

48. **The Advisory Committee understands that the application of the allotment control system would mean that much of the appropriation for training for 2006-2007 would remain unspent; an infusion of an additional $10 million for 2007 would most likely mean that the Secretary-General's own desired limit of 2 per cent would be exceeded. In any case, in the opinion of the Committee, it would be premature to approve such a significant addition of funds prior to the receipt of the analysis and information requested in paragraph 46 above. Under the circumstances, the Committee recommends an additional appropriation of $3 million for the purposes described in paragraphs 217-221 of the Secretary-General's report (see para. 47 above). The Committee is of the opinion that the balance of the existing appropriation should be utilized, to the extent possible, to accommodate new priorities and initiatives.**

E. Proposal 4 — contractual arrangements

49. **In paragraph 264 of the report of the Secretary-General, the General Assembly is requested to approve the proposal to introduce one United Nations staff contract under one set of staff rules and the proposal to introduce continuing contracts in lieu of permanent appointments. The Advisory Committee points out that these are separate proposals and that they should be considered on their own merits — one does not depend on the other. Moreover, in paragraph 264 (b) the "replacement" of permanent contracts refers to discontinuing their use for future staff members, not to replacing existing permanent contracts held by current staff members or to denying those who might be eligible for a permanent contract the opportunity to obtain one; what is intended is the "introduction" of continuing contracts.**

50. Paragraphs 224 to 239 of the report provide background to the Secretary-General's proposed introduction of one United Nations staff contract. Initially, all staff served under one set of staff rules, now known as the 100 series. The 200 series, which has broadly similar conditions of service and benefits, was introduced for specialist personnel working on technical assistance projects. The 300 series, which was initially applied to staff hired for no more than six months, was expanded in 1994 to include appointments of limited duration of up to three years, with a possible exceptional extension for a fourth and final year. It was intended to provide a mechanism for the recruitment of staff on appointments of limited duration in peacekeeping and other missions, technical cooperation in the field and other emergency situations. The conditions of service under appointments of limited duration were designed to make such appointments simple to administer; however, over the years changes were introduced to address disparities in the conditions of service among staff in different types of contracts, with the result that over time appointments of limited duration have become complex to administer.

51. As noted in paragraph 263 of the report, the current proposals would give rise to financial requirements relating to the reappointment of international staff currently serving on appointments of limited duration to a new mission appointment governed by the new United Nations contract, which would entail additional entitlements for education grant, family-visit travel and repatriation grant. It is estimated that total additional costs for 2007 would amount to $19.1 million, comprising $3.4 million relating to 17 special political missions and $15.7 million for 15 peacekeeping missions. Information on financial implications beyond 2007 is not provided.

52. **The Advisory Committee appreciates the Secretary-General's efforts to simplify the administration of the staff at the United Nations by introducing one United Nations staff contract under one set of staff rules. However, the Committee notes that reports of the International Civil Service Commission to be considered in the near future (see para. 8 above and para. 53 below) are likely to have an impact on this issue because they involve conditions of service in the field. Moreover, the Secretary-General has yet to provide detailed information on the financial implications of this reform beyond 2007. The Committee is therefore of the opinion that the proposal to introduce one United Nations staff contract under one set of staff rules should be revisited in the light of General Assembly action on recommendations of the International Civil Service Commission and after the Secretary-General has had the opportunity to provide further detailed information on financial implications.**

53. The Secretary-General proposed the simplification of contractual arrangements as far back as the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly (see A/55/253 and Corr.1). At its request, the Secretary-General submitted detailed proposals for contractual arrangements to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session (A/59/263/Add.1). The Assembly decided to revert to the issue at its sixtieth session in the context of its consideration of the report of the International Civil Service Commission on contractual arrangements (resolution 59/266, sect. IX). In August 2005, the Commission presented a proposed framework for contractual arrangements in the organization of the United Nations common system (see A/60/30, annex IV), with which the Secretary-General's proposals are consistent. As indicated in paragraph 232 of the report on investing in people, the Commission's proposed framework is under consideration by the Assembly.

54. As indicated in paragraph 247 of the report, the intention is that permanent contracts would no longer be offered but that the change would not affect the staff who currently hold permanent contracts, or the acquired rights of staff who, by the time the change became effective, would have the right under existing rules to be considered for permanent appointment. The Secretary-General also indicates that the proposed continuing appointment could be terminated on the same grounds as is currently the case for permanent appointments or "in the interest of the good administration of the Organization" (para. 249). The Advisory Committee points out, however, that under the terms of staff regulation 9.1, paragraph (a), the Secretary-General may terminate the appointment of a staff member who holds a permanent appointment if such action would be in the interest of the good administration of the Organization and in accordance with the standards of the Charter, "provided that the action is not contested by the staff member concerned". Continuing contracts would not include this proviso. Rather, in the case of termination of continuing appointments, the staff member concerned is to be given the opportunity to review the recommendation and supporting documentation and to provide comments to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management before a final decision is made. **In the opinion of the Committee, further clarification should be provided as to the opportunities for redress under the new system.**

55. **As for the introduction of continuing contracts, the Advisory Committee notes that the General Assembly is already seized of the matter. The Committee recommends that the Secretary-General provide a more complete analysis of the impact of the review of all staff members appointed under the 100 series mentioned in paragraph 264 (d), including possible options for avoiding going over the 70 per cent level mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 51/226, section V, paragraph 2.**

56. **The requests in paragraphs 264 (e) and (f) constitute a part of the financial consequences of the proposal to introduce the one staff contract under one set of staff rules. In view of paragraph 52 above, the Committee is of the opinion that no action need be taken by the Assembly on those requests at this time.**

F. Harmonization of conditions of service

57. Under the set of proposals on the harmonization of conditions of service, the Secretary-General seeks to address the differences in the conditions of service that have evolved among staff serving in the field. As noted in paragraph 272 of his report, those differences exist between staff with 300-series appointments and those with 100-series appointments, between staff with 100-series appointments who are mission appointees and those who are assigned from Headquarters, and between staff serving in peace operations and those serving with the United Nations funds and programmes. The differences relate to the designation of missions as family or non-family, the payment of compensation for maintaining a second household, the scope of the rest and recuperation scheme, the calculation of hazard pay and the payment of lump sums for travel entitlements.

58. The General Assembly, in its resolution 59/266 (sect. X, para. 5), requested the International Civil Service Commission to present an analysis to the Assembly at its

sixty-first session of the desirability and feasibility of harmonizing conditions of service in the field, including at non-family duty stations, and to provide full details of the financial implications. As indicated in paragraph 270 of the report of the Secretary-General, the Commission, after having considered the information brought to light by the Secretary-General's initial report on investing in the United Nations (A/60/692 and Corr.1), decided to withdraw the recommendations related to the harmonization of benefits for field staff presented in its 2005 annual report (see A/60/30, paras. 161-162). As interim measures to allow maximum flexibility under the current contractual arrangements for staff in peacekeeping missions, the Commission recommended removing the four-year limitation on 300-series appointments; permitting the conversion to mission-specific 100-series contracts for staff members who have a minimum of four years of service, provided that their functions have been reviewed and found necessary and their performance has been confirmed as fully satisfactory; and permitting the reassignment of 300- and 100-series mission-specific appointees to another mission in a similar capacity to meet the requirements of the Organization. It also decided to establish a working group to expedite the review of the compensation packages for internationally recruited staff serving at non-family duty stations and submit proposals for a harmonized approach within the United Nations common system to the Commission at its sixty-fourth session, in March 2007. Under its terms of reference (see A/61/30, annex VIII), the Working Group is charged, inter alia, with designing a compensation package that is transparent, simple and easy to administer, paying attention to elements that have proved to be difficult to administer, such as education benefits, travel entitlements and leave. The Working Group is also charged with designing and conducting simulations to determine the cost implications of the various proposals.

59. **In view of the fact that the International Civil Service Commission is seized of this matter and is planning to submit a report on it in March 2007, the Advisory Committee is of the opinion that the consideration of proposals relating to the harmonization of conditions of service in the field, including the financial implications of any change in provisions for rest and recuperation and for non-family/family duty station entitlements,[1] is premature. It therefore recommends that no action be taken by the Assembly on the proposals in paragraph 299, pending receipt of the report of the International Civil Service Commission on the basis of the recommendations of the Working Group on Entitlements of Internationally Recruited Staff Serving in Non-Family Duty Stations.**

60. **The Advisory Committee notes the Secretary-General's intention to designate field duty stations as non-family or family on the basis of the security phase in effect and the capacity of the infrastructure at the duty station (see A/61/255, paras. 278, 279 and 296). In this connection, the Committee recalls its report on a strengthened and unified security management system (A/59/539), in which it called for a more integrated network (see also General Assembly resolution 59/276, sect. XI). The Committee trusts that the evaluation and determination of the appropriate security phase by the Department of Safety**

[1] There are two kinds of financial implications, those based on existing entitlements and those that would depend on future action by the General Assembly. However, information on financial requirements under the existing conditions of service will need to be provided irrespective of Assembly action on any further recommendations (see para. 60).

and Security will be followed by all United Nations entities in the field, thus avoiding discrepancies in the designation of family/non-family duty stations. The Committee also expects that such designations will be realistic and that, from time to time, reviews will be undertaken to ensure a logical application of evaluation and determination standards across United Nations duty stations. As indicated above, some of the related resource requirements for the implementation of the Secretary-General's intention depend on such decisions as may be taken on conditions of service. Resource requirements should be requested in the budgets of the affected peacekeeping operations, as well as in the regular budget under the provision for special political missions.

G. Proposals 7 and 3 — building leadership and management capacity

61. Under the set of proposals on building leadership and management capacity, the Secretary-General outlines a programme for strengthened leadership recruitment and strengthened leadership and management training and development. As indicated in paragraphs 316 to 318 of the report, he intends to establish more rigorous and systematic approaches to the selection of staff at the Under-Secretary-General, Assistant Secretary-General and Director levels, including for peace operations. Headhunting strategies are to be adopted to identify and attract promising senior leaders, and competency-based interviews will be mandatory for all senior positions. Under the proposals, all newly appointed senior staff, including those in field missions, will complete a focused induction and orientation programme, and all newly appointed senior leaders of field missions will be required to undertake induction training and development to familiarize them with the functioning of peacekeeping operations. In addition, the new Leadership Development Programme for D-1 and D-2 managers and the Management Development Programme for P-4 and P-5 managers are to be further strengthened and ongoing programmes offered progressively to managers throughout their careers, with the opportunity to participate in at least one programme per year. Senior staff will also have the opportunity to participate in inter-agency programmes such as the Senior Management Network Leadership Development Programme.

62. As noted in paragraph 336 of the report, resource requirements for this set of proposals are included under the proposals for career development and support (see paras. 42-48 above).

H. Proposal 22 — buyout

63. In paragraphs 337 to 366 of the report, the Secretary-General proposes a staff buyout programme to be carried out in two phases: an initial voluntary phase followed by a targeted buyout to be aligned with managerial and strategic priorities as identified upon completion of the mandate review and the implementation of management reforms. The Secretary-General estimates the number of staff eligible for the voluntary phase at approximately 1,000, comprising 850 staff under the regular budget and 150 staff from peacekeeping missions. The average cost of the separation package is anticipated to amount to $100,000; however, the size of the voluntary phase will depend on the number of eligible staff who express interest in

participating. Using a hypothetical figure of 15 per cent of eligible staff, the cost of the voluntary phase is estimated at $15 million.

64. As noted in paragraph 344 of the report, it is anticipated that a significant number of staff will reach retirement age over the next five years. This will have a particular impact at the managerial levels, with an anticipated retirement rate of 24.2 per cent at the P-5 level and 37.7 per cent at the Director level. **It is the opinion of the Advisory Committee that there is ample room "to improve personnel structure and quality", as requested by the General Assembly, in paragraph 163 (c) of its resolution 60/1, through the filling of current vacancies, as well as those resulting from attrition owing to retirement. In this connection, the Committee stresses that the buyout mechanism should not be used to address issues of non-performance or underperformance, since the course of action to take in these circumstances is already set forth in article IX of the Staff Regulations. The Committee therefore recommends against approval of the resources requested in paragraphs 366 (a) to (c) for the voluntary phase of the staff buyout. The Secretary-General may wish to make proposals on the targeted phase of the buyout programme consequent to the review of alternate means of service delivery and the relevant outcomes of the mandate review.**

I. Human resources information technology

65. In paragraphs 367 to 389 of the report, the Secretary-General outlines his proposals for improving the processes and tools of human resources information technology. Among the initiatives are proposals relating to the procurement of a new off-the-shelf e-staffing software package that would be integrated into the future Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, a learning management system to support career development and mobility across the Secretariat, a new document management system, a knowledge management and e-office system and a new data repository.

66. The Secretary-General requests the establishment of six new temporary posts as follows:

(a) One P-4, one P-2 and one General Service (Other level), at an estimated cost of $191,000, under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007;

(b) One P-4, one P-3 and one General Service (Other level), estimated at $102,500 to be met from the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period ending 30 June 2007, with an additional amount of $102,500 for the balance of 2007 to be sought in the context of the budget for the support account for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008.

In addition, non-post requirements amounting to $2,660,500 are requested for 2007, to be shared between the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 ($1,300,700) and the budget for the support account for peacekeeping operations ($761,600) for the period ending 30 June 2007. An amount estimated at $598,200 would subsequently be sought in the context of the budget for the support account for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008.

67. As noted in paragraphs 373 to 375 of the report, the General Assembly, in its resolution 59/266, requested the Secretary-General to fully develop the support tool

(Galaxy) and make it more efficient and user-friendly. In a subsequent report (A/59/265/Add.1), the Secretary-General stated his intention to undertake a review to establish the most appropriate technological infrastructure for the system, including the possible use of "off-the-shelf" packages. In the biennium 2005-2006, the Secretariat conducted a detailed analysis of the possible solutions and concluded that further modification of the existing Galaxy technological infrastructure would not be cost-effective. Drawing on this analysis and the experience gained so far, the Secretary-General concludes that the most cost-effective and feasible solution would be to procure an off-the-shelf e-staffing software package that would be integrated into the future ERP system. The estimated cost of launching the new e-staffing tool is $1.45 million, which includes the installation and customization of software, vendor technical maintenance and support for project management in 2007, with a view to making the transition to the new system in 2008.

68. **The Advisory Committee is convinced of the urgent need to improve the tools and processes of human resources technology. It therefore recommends approval of the resources requested in paragraph 389 (a) to (c). However, the Committee recalls its statement in its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 (A/58/7, para. VIII.30), in which it indicated that the experience thus far with the Galaxy system showed that there had been an inadequate analysis of the tasks, scope and coverage of the system before it was implemented. The Committee looks forward to the detailed study that the Secretary-General will be carrying out on the capabilities of the new technologies to be introduced, which is to be submitted to the General Assembly at its resumed sixty-first session, pursuant to Assembly resolution 60/283. In paragraph 20 of its report in document A/60/870, the Committee emphasized that the detailed study envisaged should be comprehensive and cover the needs of all users of the administrative and management systems, including those at peacekeeping missions, other field-based operations, offices away from Headquarters and regional commissions (see Assembly resolution 60/260).**

69. **With regard to paragraph 389 (d), as stated in paragraph 29 above, the Advisory Committee sees no need for the Assembly to note how potential future requirements will be presented to it.**

J. Reforming the Field Service category: investing in meeting the human resources requirements of United Nations peace operations in the twenty-first century

70. The proposals of the Secretary-General for reforming the Field Service category are contained in his report A/61/255/Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1. That report was submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/257, which deals with the Joint Inspection Unit report on reforming the Field Service category in United Nations peace operations (see A/57/78). The Secretary-General's proposals build upon and take into account the recommendations contained in the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305-S/2000/809). Background to the proposals is provided in paragraphs 1 to 20 of the Secretary-General's report, and the objectives of the proposals are summarized in paragraph 22 of that report.

71. As indicated in paragraph 41 of the Secretary-General's report, "the General Assembly is requested to approve a framework of 2,500 career civilian positions in

the United Nations peace operations, funded against the approved budgets of authorized peacekeeping operations and special political missions, for the recruitment and management of staff dedicated to the support of United Nations peace operations". Paragraph 41 also makes reference to recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit in its report on reforming the Field Service category, as further elaborated in the report of the Secretary-General on investing in people (A/61/255). Such comments as the Advisory Committee has on these matters are contained as appropriate in the paragraphs above.

72. The proposal to approve a framework of 2,500 career civilian positions in United Nations peace operations depends on a decision by the General Assembly that such a capacity is necessary and desirable. The Advisory Committee enquired as to the basis for the determination that the minimum baseline requirement would be 2,500 and was informed that a study of human resources requirements over the past 10 years, including an examination of the occupational groups employed in peacekeeping operations, led to the Secretary-General's proposal.

73. The Secretary-General's proposal seeks to address the need to provide for peacekeeping staffing on an ongoing basis; to enhance professionalism; and to enhance the ability of the United Nations to respond quickly to peacekeeping needs. As indicated in paragraph 30 of the Secretary-General's report (A/61/255/Add.1), there is no intention to add positions to the existing complements already approved under the budgets of the various peacekeeping operations. As further indicated in that paragraph, the cost implications related to the establishment of the peacekeeping capacity are included in the overall implications for the harmonization of conditions of service for staff serving in the field.

74. **While the Advisory Committee sees merit in the approach outlined in the paragraphs above, a number of elements need to be worked out and/or clarified before further progress can be made on this matter.**

75. **Taking into account the additional information received, the Advisory Committee is of the opinion that a more complete analysis is required before a determination can be made as to the totality of the requirement for civilian career peacekeepers.**

76. **Areas that need clarification include the mix of skills required, the grade distribution, the process of selection, the desirability of phasing in the capacity and the application of staff mobility (see also paras. 13 and 42 above). The management of the capacity also needs to be addressed.**

77. **A comprehensive analysis of the financial implications also needs to be carried out, and this would need to take into account the conditions of service that would apply to such staff. Further work in this regard must await the relevant decisions by the Assembly on conditions of service in the field. A clear methodology for the apportionment of the related costs among the various sources of funding (regular budget, peacekeeping and other) also needs to be developed.**

III. Gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities

78. In its resolution 57/281 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to issue a biennial report on the use of gratis personnel, indicating, inter alia, nationality and duration of service, department where employed and functions performed. The first report issued by the Secretary-General in response to that request (A/59/716) covered the two-year period from 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2004. In its report (A/59/786) the Advisory Committee requested that the details on gratis personnel be integrated into the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat in the first year of the biennium. The second report on the use of gratis personnel, issued by the Secretary-General as an addendum to the report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/61/257/Add.1), covers the period from 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2005.

79. The Advisory Committee notes that the second report is based on the same methodology as that applied for the previous report (A/59/716). A summary of the evolution of the utilization of gratis personnel from 2003 to 2005 is presented in tables 1 and 2.

Table 1
Gratis personnel, type I

	Interns			*Associate experts*			*Technical cooperation experts*							
Year	*M*	*W*	*Subtotal*	*M*	*W*	*Subtotal*	*M*	*W*	*Subtotal*	*Total type I*	*Total women*	*Percentage of women*	*Number of nationalities*	*Number of departments*
2005	423	728	1 151	63	95	158	18	5	23	1 332	828	70	109	25
2004	471	730	1 201	27	50	77	11	1	12	1 290	781	61	112	29
2003	379	678	1 057	35	43	78	11	3	14	1 149	724	63	111	28

Table 2
Gratis personnel, type II

	Type II gratis personnel						
Year	*M*	*W*	*Total type II*	*Percentage of women*	*Number of nationalities*	*Department*	*Average duration*
2005	27	19	46	41	5	OCHA	4.3 months/year
2004	63	22	85	26	33	OCHA	1.8 months/year
2003	43	10	53	19	23	OCHA, ESCWA	2.6 months/year

80. The Advisory Committee notes that the total number of gratis personnel, type I, increased from 1,290 in 2004 to 1,332 in 2005. While interns continue to constitute the majority of personnel in this group, their number decreased from 1,201 in 2004 to 1,151 in 2005. During the same period, the number of associate experts doubled, from 77 to 158. As for gratis personnel, type II, who are accepted on an exceptional basis to provide expertise not available to the Organization for specialized functions or to provide temporary or urgent assistance in the case of new

or expanded mandates, the Committee notes that their number decreased from 85 in 2004 to 46 in 2005 due to the fact that there were fewer large-scale emergency and relief operations managed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in 2005.

81. The report of the Secretary-General provides details on nationality, duration of service, departmental assignment and functions performed in eight distinct tables, presenting the data separately by year for each type of gratis personnel. **In the opinion of the Advisory Committee, this presentation makes it difficult to compare the two years of the biennium. The tables should be designed in a manner more conducive to identifying changes and trends. The Committee requests that the format of the tables be streamlined so as to consolidate the information for the two years of the biennium into a single table. This would effectively halve the number of tables in the report. Furthermore, any deviations observed from the norms established by the General Assembly on the utilization of gratis personnel (resolution 51/243) should be clearly pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General.**

82. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly take note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/61/257/Add.1), bearing in mind the comments of the Committee in paragraph 81 above.**

IV. Employment of retired former staff

83. The Advisory Committee notes from the report of the Secretary-General on the employment of retired former staff in the biennium 2004-2005 (A/61/257/Add.2) that while the number of retirees employed decreased by 12.8 per cent, from 563 in 2002-2003 to 491 in 2004-2005, the number of days worked increased by 14.8 per cent, from 84,878 to 97,406 in the same period and that the related expenditures rose by 45.7 per cent, from $23,093,000 to $33,532,000. The increases in number of days worked and expenditure were incurred mainly in the areas of language and conference services at the major duty stations, including for translation and document processing. The expansion of peacekeeping, humanitarian and other field operations worldwide also necessitated rapid reinforcement of the capacity of a number of departments and field missions, which was facilitated by the temporary recruitment of experienced retirees. The number of days worked in administrative functions decreased slightly. The number of retirees hired and days worked in substantive areas decreased by 56 per cent and 37.9 percent, respectively (A/61/257/Add.2, paras. 21-23).

84. With respect to the extension of staff beyond the mandatory age of separation, the Advisory Committee notes that a total of 222 staff were retained, a decrease of 29.5 per cent from the 2002-2003 biennium (315 staff) (A/61/257/Add.1, para. 35). However, the Committee points out that this number still represents 35.9 per cent of the total number of retirees during the 2004-2005 biennium (619 staff). **This clearly indicates continuing weaknesses in the advance planning, recruitment and staff placement processes. The Committee requests that all extensions of staff beyond the mandatory age of separation be properly justified and documented by the Office of Human Resources Management.**

85. From table 5 of A/61/257/Add.2, the Advisory Committee notes that a number of very general, non-specialized functions, such as "Clerk" and "Data entry

operator", are carried out by retired former staff. The criteria for the selection of retirees, set out in administrative instruction ST/AI/2003/8, provide, inter alia, that staff may be retained beyond the mandatory age of retirement if it has not been possible to identify a qualified candidate to discharge the functions of the post in a timely manner and that such retention should be an exception. It is not clear to the Committee why staff suitably qualified for these general functions cannot be identified in a timely manner, which once again points to recurrent deficiencies in the staff placement system.

86. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly take note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/61/257/Add.2).**

V. Consultants

87. The Secretary-General has issued a report on the use of consultants and individual contractors (A/61/257/Add.3) in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 57/305 and 59/266. The Advisory Committee notes that fewer contracts for consultants were issued during the biennium 2004-2005 than in 2002-2003. The total number of consultants and individual contractors also decreased, by 32.4 per cent and 41.7 per cent, respectively. Expenditure for consultants decreased by $40.3 million and for individual contractors by $11.7 million. The average duration of a contract decreased by 3.1 days for consultants but increased by 0.7 days for individual contractors. Consultants were used mainly for programme implementation and advisory services, while individual contractors were used for programme implementation, lectures, training courses and preparation of meetings.

88. In its previous report, the Advisory Committee noted that the Office of Human Resources Management had enhanced its monitoring capacity and the tracking of progress made towards the achievement of the targets in the departmental human resources action plans. It was expected that this would enable the Office to improve its monitoring of the proper use of consultants for expertise that is not available within the Organization, in line with General Assembly guidelines (A/59/446, para. 60). The Committee was informed that the human resources action plans were now reviewed on a regular basis by the Management Performance Board during its biannual meetings with programme managers and that the first such exercise had been completed in July 2006 (A/61/319). **The Committee requests that the Secretary-General report on progress made in the next report on consultants and individual contractors. The Committee also requests that the next report concentrate more on analysis rather than merely provide raw data.**

89. The Advisory Committee notes that expenditure for institutional contractors decreased sharply, from $17,614,900 in 2002-2003 to $9,881,000 in 2004-2005. The number of contracts and months worked also decreased, from 578 and 1,713, respectively, in 2002-2003 to 386 and 1,046 in 2004-2005. **The Committee is concerned that the expenditure under this category may be understated, and it requests that details by institution, duration and expenditure be provided in future reports.**

90. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly take note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/61/257/Add.3).**

VI. Comprehensive guidelines for consultants in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

91. The Advisory Committee has taken note of the report of the Secretary-General on the comprehensive guidelines for consultants in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (A/61/201). That report indicates that a new comprehensive policy on individual consultants was implemented on 1 April 2005 through an internal memorandum, and that that policy was consistent with administrative instruction ST/AI/1999/7 and Amend.1 (A/61/201, para. 2). The changes introduced by the new policy include a "new type of consultancy, the locally hired international consultant" (A/61/201, para. 6).

92. The Committee requested and received additional information from UNHCR on the modalities concerning the hiring and remuneration of this category of consultant. It was informed that UNHCR had identified a number of individuals hired as international consultants, with the attendant benefits, who already lived in the duty station where they were hired but who did not originate from the country of that duty station. Under the new policy, those individuals would not receive payments for travel to and from the duty station, nor daily subsistence allowance. UNHCR indicated that the policy was based on the lessons learned from actual practice and was aimed at increasing clarity, transparency and cost-effectiveness, in a manner consistent with the best interests of the Organization. Furthermore, UNHCR indicated that the policy did not in fact introduce a new type of consultant, since there was no differentiation with respect to required qualifications or expertise; nor did it affect the conditions of service of those consultants in any manner other than the above-mentioned travel and daily subsistence allowance remuneration.

93. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly take note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/61/201).**